The Thesis Committee for Stephanie Ann Kent
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following Thesis:

Performative Embodiment and Museum Education: Exploring Drama-Based Professional Learning with Museum Educators

APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

Kathryn M. Dawson, Supervisor

Lara R. Dossett

Performative Embodiment and Museum Education:
Exploring Drama-Based Professional Learning with Museum Educators

by

Stephanie Ann Kent

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Dedication

This document is dedicated to museum educators who work tirelessly to engage each and every visitor to their museums. I may not have recognized your hard work prior to this project, but I definitely do now.

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Abstract

Performative Embodiment and Museum Education: Exploring Drama-Based Professional Learning with Museum Educators

Stephanie Ann Kent, MFA

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Supervisor: Kathryn Dawson

How can museum educators increase the accessibility of museum education for a diverse range of learners? In this MFA thesis, the author explores the relationship between multimodal meaning-making through drama-based strategies and the accessibility of educational experiences on the museum floor. Additionally, this document looks at the effects of drama-based professional learning on the pedagogical practices of museum educators at the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin. The author seeks to answer the questions: *How does the design and implementation of drama-based professional learning for museum educators impact their facilitation of inquiries around art pieces on the gallery floor? How can performative embodiment and drama-based pedagogy offer museum visitors multiple entry points and ways to engage in dialogue about art pieces?*

Through three case studies, this qualitative research study explores the structure and impact of drama-based professional learning. The case studies share the experiences of museum educators when implementing drama-based strategies on the museum floor in

addition to exploring how dialogic reflection supports the educators' understandings around facilitation and learning design within drama-based pedagogy. Following the presentation of the cases, the author engages in a cross-case analysis that looks at the similarities and differences of the case studies. The study suggests that drama-based strategies may increase the engagement of young visitors on the museum floor due to the agency and choice inherent in drama-based strategies. This study also proposes that professional learning in museum settings which uses dialogic reflection between educators engaged in aligned practices aids the educators in determining how to navigate challenges within their practice. The document ends with the limitations of the study and recommendations for future iterations of the project.

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When I was in high school, I fell in love with a painting by Wassily Kandinsky. I do not remember the first time I saw the piece, but I remember going back to visit it over and over again. I would take the metro into Washington, DC from my house in Virginia, and I would visit the Kandinsky at the National Gallery of Art. Sometimes I would visit other art pieces or exhibits; sometimes I would just visit the Kandinsky. Admission was free to the museum, which gave me the freedom to visit the piece as often as I liked. I loved its bold colors and the contrast of strong and soft shapes. And I loved that each time I visited, I saw something new in the piece. I came to think of it as "my" Kandinsky, and visiting it like an old friend made me feel like I belonged in the otherwise imposing National Gallery of Art.

After I went off to college, I still visited the painting on my breaks from school, and I had a poster of the piece on the wall of my dorm room. But over time I stopped visiting the Kandinsky, and although I lived in DC after college, I did not end up at museums as often as I would have liked. I got caught up in my work as a teacher: grading, curriculum planning, meetings with students, attending professional development. I didn't think about how museums could reinvigorate my teaching, how museums are spacing of learning, just like traditional classrooms.

I returned to graduate school in 2015 to attend the Drama and Theatre for Youth and Communities program at the University of Texas at Austin. I hoped to expand my definition of teaching and to learn how I could integrate drama into classroom spaces. I began working with the professional organization Drama for Schools, and I discovered that arts-based approaches to teaching and learning could offer students multiple entry

points into engaging in the classroom, inviting them to engage in dialogue not just verbally, but through visual art, through movement, and through sound. I worked with classroom teachers in professional learning settings, combining my evolving expertise in drama-based pedagogy with their pedagogical and curricular expertise to imagine a classroom where students felt acknowledged, valued and heard.

In the summer before my final year of graduate school, my thesis advisor asked me if I would be interested in taking my passion for professional learning with educators into a museum setting for my thesis project. I met with the director of education at the museum, and as we toured the space together, I remembered my love of the Kandinsky from my childhood. As I looked around at the art pieces that surrounded me, I wondered if my work with drama-based strategies had a place in this museum. The director of education and I discussed the possibility of a drama-based professional learning sequence for museum educators that explored the possibilities of incorporating drama-based strategies into museum tours or guided visits. Through my training in graduate school and with Drama for Schools, I had discovered that drama-based strategies could foster a sense of belonging for students in the classroom, and I wondered if this might be true as well for museum visitors if drama-based strategies were incorporated into guided visits. I remembered the sense of belonging I felt in the National Gallery of Art because of my connection to the Kandinsky, and I wondered if drama-based strategies might be able to foster that same sense of belonging and connection for museum visitors, even within the constraints of a short guided visit.

My MFA thesis document examines how drama-based strategies can be used on the gallery floor in an art museum to build dialogue amongst visitors and museum educators. Specifically, I look at how drama-based strategies can create a sense of connection and belonging for museum visitors on a guided visit through the process of

embodied meaning-making. Further, I consider what types of professional learning experiences might create a reciprocal learning experience between myself and the museum educators involved in my study. Museum education was a new area of learning for me when I began this project, just as drama-based pedagogy was a new area of learning for the museum educators. I was excited to develop a professional learning scope and sequence where we could bring together our different areas of expertise to explore how best to incorporate drama-based strategies on the museum floor. In this document, I address the questions: *How does the design and implementation of drama-based professional learning for museum educators impact their facilitation of inquiries around art pieces on the gallery floor? How can performative embodiment and drama-based pedagogy offer museum visitors multiple entry points and ways to engage in dialogue about art pieces?*

To answer these questions, I engaged in qualitative research which, according to educator John Cresswell, is "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (4). I not only wanted to explore the meaning that museum educators ascribe to a problem or situation faced on the museum floor, I also wanted to explore and compare the multiple meanings made by the museum educators through the professional learning process. Therefore, I chose to employ a cross-case analysis structure for my research. Educational researchers Johnny Saldaña and Matt Omasta describe a case study as research that "focus[es] on a single unit—one person, one group, one organization and so on," while a cross-case analysis is where case studies are "combined with or compared to others" (148). A case study research method supported my constructivist worldview, because it gave me the opportunity to look at how my participants make meaning and "how their backgrounds shape their interpretations" (Creswell 8). By engaging in a cross-case analysis, I could

compare my participants' experiences of and perspectives on incorporating drama-based strategies into their gallery teaching practice. Furthermore, cross-case analysis enabled me to compare the similarities and differences between the ways my participants reflected on their use of drama-based strategies in guided visits.

My thesis project took place at the Blanton Museum of Art, housed on the University of Texas at Austin campus, from October 2017 to February 2018. I worked with the museum educators in drama-based professional learning sessions to provide strategies for building dialogue around contemporary art pieces by people of color. The goal of the professional learning was to explore how to create a space for visitors to engage in building connections between the art pieces, themselves and one another to foster a sense of belonging and access to the museum collection. When I began this project, I was a classroom teacher new to museum education. I was intent on sharing my expertise in inclusive teaching practices, but I was also deeply committed to learning from the museum educators who took part in my professional learning sessions. Because of this, I modeled drama-based strategies on the museum floor for the educators, but I also offered a space where the educators could try out the strategies themselves and reflect on how the strategies may or may not fit into their practice. Together, we explored how (and if) drama-based strategies can build opportunities for visitors to share their experience and expertise, explore multiple perspectives, and make choices in the ways they engage in a guided visit that may only last 50 minutes.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

In this section, I will introduce major arguments underpinning the move towards more constructivist practices in museum education. I will then explore how drama-based

pedagogy and performative embodiment, as arts-based approaches to constructivist education, might be used by museum educators to offer museum visitors multiple, explicitly constructivist, entry points into their facilitation inquiries around objects on the museum floor. I will then look at literature on professional learning structures in order to provide a framework for the design and implementation of drama-based professional learning for museum educators that supports the use of drama-based pedagogy and dialogic meaning-making on the museum floor.

Constructivist Museum Education

In the introduction to her work *The Participatory Museum*, Nina Simon, referencing a 2009 National Endowment for the Arts report, states that "Over the last 20 years, audiences for museums, galleries, and performing arts institutions have decreased, and the audiences that remain are older and whiter than the overall population" (i). She follows this statement with the question: "How can cultural institutions reconnect with the public and demonstrate their value and relevance in contemporary life?" (Simon i). Simon, like many practitioners in the museum field, wonders how traditionally white institutions can remain relevant as the population in this country becomes increasingly diverse. How can museums (re)connect to the communities that they are a part of?

Nina Simon argues that "a participatory museum," may be a solution to the question of museum relevance within a community. She notes that "a participatory museum," or a space that is "audience-centered" (ii), creates exhibits with the audience, or the community the museum serves, and their needs, experiences and prior knowledge in mind. For the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas, "community" consists not only of the university students, but also the wider Austin community. To this end, the museum educators and I attempted to keep this wider Austin community in mind

by focusing our work together on public tours and tours for students in Austin Independent Public Schools.

Simon's "participatory museum" is reminiscent of George Hein's "constructivist museum." George Hein, an educator and scholar with a focus on museum education, wrote the text *Learning in the Museum*, which introduces this concept of "the constructivist museum." Hein's use of the term "constructivist" references his application of Russian theorist Lev Vygotsky's socio-constructivist theories to the pedagogy and practice of museum education. Vygotsky states that learning is constructed through social processes. In *Learning in the Museum*, Hein offers three guiding questions to direct museum educators in considering constructivist practices on the museum floor:

> 1. What is done to acknowledge that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner?
> 2. How is learning itself made active? What is done to engage the visitor?
> 3. How is the situation designed to make it accessible-- physically, socially, intellectually-- to the visitor? (156)

Together, these questions connect the concepts of accessibility, active engagement, and a visitor-centered experience to the quality of learning that happens in the museum. Next, I will unpack each of these questions in relation to Vygotsky's theory of constructivism. Additionally, I will connect these questions to theories by education scholars that reference Vygotsky's work.

Acknowledging that Knowledge is Constructed by the Learner

Vygotsky believed that learning begins long before children attend school, and that learning which happens outside of traditional educational settings needs to be taken

into account by educators when they design learning experiences. The body of knowledge that a person already has represents their zone of actual development, or understandings "that have already been established as a result of *completed* developmental cycles" (Vygotsky 85). Tasks a person can accomplish or concepts they can understand without help live in the zone of actual development. Hein references how Vygotsky's concept of the zone of actual development functions with visitors in museum settings when he notes that there is a "need for the learner to be able to associate an educational situation with what is already known," and what is already known includes "all the ideas and concepts that a learner brings to a situation" (156). Hein is stating that the learner's zone of actual development, or the prior knowledge that the learner holds, needs to be taken into account by museum educators when designing engaging learning experiences on the museum floor.

Vygotsky describes the zone of *proximal* development as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under . . . guidance or in collaboration" (86). The ZPD represents what we are capable of when we are in collaboration with others. Hein relates the concept of the ZPD to museums when he states: "The Constructivist Museum not only accepts the possibility of socially mediated learning, it makes provisions for social interaction and designs spaces, constructs exhibitions, and organizes programs to deliberately capitalize on learning as a social activity" (174). When Hein "acknowledge[s] that knowledge is constructed in the mind

of the learner," he makes an argument for the collaborative learning experiences that occur when gallery visits are interactive (156).

Actively Engaging the Museum Visitor

As defined by educational scholars Kathryn Dawson and Bridget Lee, active learning occurs when "participants are responsible for meaning-making and understanding rather than passively receiving knowledge" (339). Gallery experiences become more active and engaging for visitors when space is made for visitors to be in dialogue with one another and with the objects in the museum. In "Conversation, Discussion and Dialogue," Rika Burnham and Elliot Kai-Kee state that "A central part of contemporary gallery teaching practice is devoted to encouraging our audiences to talk freely" (79). The authors then go on to qualify this freedom to talk: "What we seek is a certain kind and quality of talk: talk that yields knowledge and understanding" (Burnham and Kai-Kee 80). This kind of talking needs to be directed by both the visitors and museum educators present in the gallery space. It needs to focus on the art object(s), but it also needs to incorporate the prior knowledge and lived experiences of the visitors and of the museum educators, allowing for an open exchange of ideas and perspectives.

Burnham and Kai-Kee recognize dialogue as a type of talking that combines all of these elements; it is a practice where "all participants, including the teacher, take on the task of exploring a work of art together through the exchange of observations and ideas. Dialogue is a shared inquiry, a way of seeing and thinking together in a cooperative pursuit of understanding" (Burnham and Kai-Kee 87). Through dialogue, museum

educators and visitors engage in socially mediated learning, where they make meaning together.

Designing Accessible Museums

In a document released by the American Association of Museums (AAM) called *Excellence in Practice: Museum Education and Principles*, the AAM lays out considerations it deems "critical" for museum educators. Under a section entitled "Accessibility," the document calls for educators to "address and employ a diversity of perspectives" by "provid[ing] multiple levels and points of entry into content, including intellectual, physical, cultural, individual, group, and intergenerational" (7). When museum educators build dialogue, as defined by Burnham and Kai-Kee, they make room for visitors to bring their multiple perspectives to the art viewing experience. However, Burnham and Kai-Kee's definition of dialogue is inherently verbal. This means it may not account for visitors who, for any number of reasons, do not want to talk. Therefore, gallery visits that are designed to engage all visitors through verbal questions and answers may not in fact feel accessible to all visitors, while a more multimodal approach to dialogue that includes alternative approaches to meaning-making may appeal to a wider range of visitors.

Multimodal Meaning-Making, Drama-Based Pedagogy and Performative Embodiment

Educators and scholars Kathryn Dawson and Bridget Lee state that "multimodal meaning-making acknowledges that individuals communicate through the spoken and

written word as well as through their interactions with the environment, including drawing or visual images, gestures, facial expressions, and bodies" (25). Educators, when they acknowledge that meaning can be made and expressed in ways beyond the spoken and written word, open up a broad spectrum of ways for individuals to collaboratively make meaning, which increases the accessibility of the meaning-making process. Hein advocates for multimodal meaning-making in museums. He states that "a question to ask of any gallery or exhibit that strives to be constructivist is whether it allows visitors to engage with it using a range of learning modalities" (164). Museum educators can create opportunities for visitors to access a range of learning modalities by introducing drama-based strategies into guided museum visits. Through drama-based strategies, visitors can bring themselves and their imaginations to a collaborative, multimodal interpretive experience on the museum floor.

Dawson and Lee, in their text *Drama-Based Pedagogy: Activating Learning Across the Curriculum,* describe how drama-based teaching strategies offer learners a range of ways to engage in multimodal meaning-making in an educational context. Dawson and Lee define the practice of drama-based pedagogy as an approach to teaching that "uses active and dramatic approaches to engage students in academic, affective and aesthetic learning through dialogic meaning-making in all areas of the curriculum" (17). Their codified collection of drama-based strategies exists on a continuum from active to dramatic, which invites participants to engage in multimodal dialogue as themselves or as a character within an imagine set of circumstances. Drama-based pedagogy offers multiple entry points for participants to engage in dialogue; they can communicate and

collaborate not only through words, but also through non-linguistic sound and movement. Dawson and Lee also name three different types of learning, academic, affective and aesthetic, that can be operationalized within most drama-based strategies. When teachers focus on all three of these types of learning in drama-based strategies, they again offer students multiple entry points into a learning experience. Additionally, through drama-based pedagogy, students are poised "to imagine new possibilities and to embody and make meaning as a way to situate understanding within the larger narrative/story of the human condition" (Dawson and Lee 18). Students who engage in drama-based strategies can collaboratively build new meanings about themselves and the world, which is why I imagined drama-based strategies could create a meaningful interpretive experience for visitors on the museum floor.

In the text "Embodiment and Performance in Pedagogy Research: Investigating the Possibility of the Body in Curriculum Experience," educators Mia Perry and Carmen Medina explore the ways in which active and dramatic learning highlights the place of the body in educational experiences. Learning cannot be split from the body, and yet, as Perry and Medina note, even in constructivist education, "The body is [often] considered representational and subservient to the mind" (62). Referencing scholar Elizabeth Ellsworth, Perry and Medina urge educators to see the body as a "place of learning" equal to the mind. Bodies are constantly in movement and consistently changing, providing educators with a visual of learners as "emerging, evolving and unfinished" (Perry and Medina 65).

When educators introduce drama-based strategies into the educational sphere, they add another layer to the body as a place of learning, thinking then about "the performed self, the performed character, and spatial relations" between bodies (Perry and Medina 65). Drama-based pedagogy, which incorporates performative embodiment into educational practice, puts the body on the same level as the mind as a place of knowing. When educators recognize knowing as a process of becoming instead of as a static state, and when they see academic, affective and aesthetic understanding as intertwined and equally important, they offer participants in an educational experience multiple entry points to ways of learning. In my work at the Blanton, I aimed to bring a practice of performative embodiment, through drama-based pedagogy, into museum teaching. My goal was to center and privilege the body as a place of learning and knowing. I wondered if centering both the body and the mind as places of meaning-making and offering museum visitors a variety of entry points into learning could make learning, and the museum itself, feel more accessible.

Professional Learning for Museum Educators

In the text "Reframing Professional Development through Understanding Authentic Professional Learning," education scholar Ann Webster-Wright notes that "Many professional development practices still focus on delivering content rather than enhancing learning" (702). Webster-Wright advocates instead for what she calls "authentic professional learning" that is "continuing, active, social and related to practice" (703), which is in line with the goals of constructivist teaching practices. Based

on these arguments, I wondered if I could design professional learning for museum educators about how to integrate constructivist, drama-based strategies into gallery teaching, which also uses a constructivist performative embodiment approach.

As a professional learning specialist with Drama for Schools (DFS), an organization that provides professional learning in drama-based pedagogy for teachers, I had the opportunity to work within a professional learning model where the ontological framework of the training is aligned with the epistemological underpinnings of the content. In other words, I trained teachers in ways of implementing a constructivist, drama-based practice in their classrooms through a constructivist, drama-based professional learning model. In my workshops with museum educators and docents at the Blanton, I mirrored DFS's practices, using constructivist, drama-based strategies to train the educators in constructivist, drama-based museum practices.

Theoretical Frame: Reflective Practice and Professional Learning

A key goal of my research in this project was to give museum educators a space to facilitate some of the drama-based strategies they participated in during the professional learning sessions, followed by an opportunity for reflection and feedback. If the hope is to support museums educators in moving from their zone of actual development to their zone of proximal development regarding drama-based constructivist teaching, their professional learning must include a structured element of reflective practice. Philosopher and educator Donald Schön echoes Webster-Wright's call for a change in professional learning practices when he states: "Professional educators have

voiced with increasing frequency their worries about the gaps between schools' prevailing conception of professional knowledge and the actual competencies required of practitioners in the field" (10). He follows this by saying, "As we have come to see with increasing clarity over the last twenty or so years, the problems of real-world practice do not present themselves to practitioners as well-formed structures" (Schön 4). Instead, these problems present themselves as "messy, indeterminate situations" (Schön 4). Therefore, professional learning structures need to include educational practices that address how to navigate "messy indeterminate situations."

Schön believes, because of the inherently indeterminate nature of professional practice, that professional learning should include what he calls a "reflective practicum." This practicum is "aimed at helping [practitioners] acquire the kind of artistry essential to competence in the indeterminate zones of practice" (18). He says that this practicum requires the practitioner to engage in "a kind of improvisation, inventing and testing in the situation strategies of [the practitioner's] own devising" (Schön 5) in order to solve novel problems that arise in day to day professional practice. This praxis of "improvisation, inventing and testing" inherently involves reflection.

Schön breaks reflective practice down into three parts: knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Schön describes knowing-in-action as "the sorts of know-how we reveal in our intelligent action" or "spontaneous, skillful execution of […] performance" (25). Knowing-in-action is a deeply embedded understanding of how to complete a task or action that allows a person to engage in that task or action with minimal planning or forethought. For example, an educator may experience knowing-in-

action when they describe a certain concept in class, a concept they've described any number of times throughout their years of teaching.

A moment may occur, though, during knowing-in-action when "a familiar routine produces an unexpected result; an error stubbornly resists correction; or although the usual actions produce the usual outcomes, we find something odd about them because, for some reason, we have begun to look at them in a new way" (Schön 26). At any one of these moments, a practitioner may choose to reflect-in-action. Schön describes reflection-in-action as "reflect[ing] in the midst of an action without interrupting it" or reflecting in the midst of an action where "our thinking [then] serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it" (26). For example, an educator may notice that their students don't seem to understand the concept the educator is describing to the class. The educator may choose to reflect-in-action, taking a brief moment to evaluate why the students are having difficulty with the concept. Then they may (or may not) choose to change their words or actions based on their reflection-in-action.

Schön encourages practitioners to reflect on their knowing- and reflection-in-action, because "our reflection on our past reflection-in-action may indirectly shape our future action" (31). For example, after their class has ended, a teacher may reflect on the moments of knowing- and reflecting-in-action, which may result in them choosing to restructure how they present the given concept in the future. My research for this paper focuses on how museum educators describe the knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action that occurs when they're facilitating drama-based strategies on the museum floor. I

then explore how dialogic reflection-on-action, taking place between the museum educator and myself, can help museum educators build their teaching practice.

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

In this paper, I will share my experiences in drama-based professional learning with museum educators at the Blanton Museum of Art. My introductory chapter provided a brief overview of my project and methodology. I outlined major research in constructivist museum education, drama-based pedagogy and performative embodiment, and professional learning structures in order to provide a framework for the design and implementation of drama-based professional learning for museum educators. My second chapter will provide an in-depth project description and methodology followed by three case studies and a cross-case analysis. Each case study consists of a description of a museum educator, how they used a drama-based strategy on the museum floor, and an analysis of our paired dialogic reflection on their use of the drama-based strategy, through the lens of Schön's structure of reflective practice. My thesis concludes with a third chapter, which provides a reflection on the project in addition to limitations and recommendations for the future.

Chapter 2

> Museum educators are specialists who help museums fulfill their educational mission. They recognize that many factors affect the personal, voluntary learning that occurs in museums. They seek to promote the process of individual and group discovery to document its effect (AAM Committee on Education 6).

In the following chapter, I will explore how professional learning in drama-based pedagogy helps museum educators address the "many factors that affect the personal, voluntary learning that occurs in museums." First, in the Project Overview, I will provide a description of the process I went through to build constructivist, drama-based professional learning opportunities for museum educators at the Blanton Museum of Art. I will then provide an outline of each professional learning session, followed by a description of how I continued to engage with certain museum educators on a voluntary basis. This continued engagement is the basis of my research, so my methodology section describes how I collected and analyzed my research of this continued engagement for my case studies. I will then follow my three case studies with a cross-case analysis and discussion. Throughout the chapter, I address my research questions: *How does the design and implementation of drama-based professional learning for museum educators impact their facilitation of inquiries around art pieces on the gallery floor? How can performative embodiment and drama-based pedagogy offer museum visitors multiple entry points and ways to engage in dialogue about art pieces?*

PROJECT AND PARTICIPANTS OVERVIEW

The Blanton Museum of Art, which is housed on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin, has a "permanent collection of more than 17,000 works[, and] is recognized for its European paintings, an encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, and modern and contemporary American and Latin American art" ("About"). The

Blanton provides programming for university audiences, K-12 school groups, and families. In this document, I will focus on the Blanton's K-12 programming because it was central to the work I did with the museum educators. The Blanton describes their K-12 programming as "Guided visits[1] [that] invite students to draw connections between art, their lives, and the world around them so they can become more critically engaged citizens. Students are encouraged to use evidential reasoning to construct interpretations about objects of art and develop social and emotional skills" ("Academic Resources: School Programs"). In my project, I engaged with museum education staff, gallery teaching fellows and docents[2], all of whom lead guided visits in the museum.

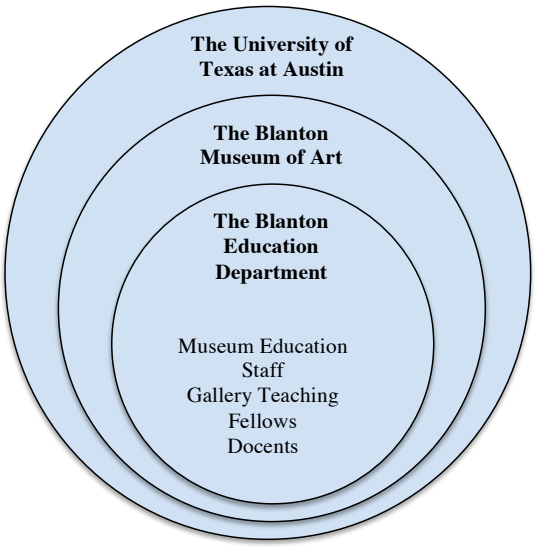

Figure 1: The Blanton Education Department

[1] "Gallery Visit" is a term that the Blanton museum educators use to replace the word "tour."

[2] When I use the term museum education staff, I am referencing salaried educators in the museum education department at the Blanton. Gallery teaching fellows at the Blanton are University of Texas at Austin students who work in conjunction with the museum education staff to "coordinate and facilitate the museum's PK-12 multiple-visit programs." Docents at the Blanton are volunteers who lead gallery visits, both for the public and for school groups. When I use the term "museum educators," I am referring to all three of these groups.

Structure and Goals

I began my work at the Blanton Museum of Art because the education staff expressed interest in professional learning for the their staff, gallery teaching fellows and docents that would provide tools to support conversations about race. Building dialogue around identity on the museum floor was particularly important to the museum education staff because many of the pieces incorporated into gallery visits at the Blanton address themes of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion and socio-economic status. Additionally, the Blanton offers extensive programming for middle and high school students exploring issues of identity, which informed the choice that the museum education staff and I made to focus on how drama-based pedagogy can support dialogue about identity. A key program at the Blanton that I engaged with during this study is called "Doing Social Justice," and it is described by the museum as "Ask[ing] students to critically examine their point of view and to empathetically take the perspective of others" ("Blanton School Programs Brochure"). The majority of the education staff and gallery teaching fellows at the Blanton work with the "Doing Social Justice" program, along with a number of the docents, which made it an additionally strong priority for the education staff in the professional learning sessions.

Together, the museum education staff and I decided that the professional learning focus for my study would consist of four sessions, one exclusively for education staff and gallery teaching fellows, and three scaffolded sessions for docents. The museum educator for university audiences asked that the trainings for the staff and the docents be separate, "because of the difference in experience and training between the two groups" (Field

Notes 31 Aug. 2017). In the session for museum staff and gallery teaching fellows, I began by focusing on how an educator's identity affects their teaching practices. Because of the museum educators' and gallery teaching fellows' focus on the "Doing Social Justice" program, I thought an exploration of identity and point of view could be beneficial to their teaching practices. We then focused on how drama-based pedagogy can be used to explore multiple perspectives through a range of meaning-making practices. This focus on the uses of drama-based pedagogy on the museum floor extended to the docent sessions as well.

I chose to have three sessions for the docents so we could focus on learning design in addition to building dialogue through drama-based strategies. The learning design that underpins drama-based pedagogy is based in educators Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe's concept of "backward design." Dawson and Lee state that backward design, within drama-based pedagogy,

> invites educators to reflect on 'what students need to know' and 'big idea' teaching goals as they construct an 'essential question' to drive the larger inquiry. It also encourages teachers to use key indicators and evidence that students are 'getting it'—making progress towards the identified learning goals— within their teaching and learning design" (31).

As a student/practitioner of drama-based pedagogy, I have learned to follow this practice of establishing essential questions and goals for an inquiry, in addition to embedding questions and strategies into the inquiry to assess student's understanding of the inquiry's big ideas. I knew, from the museum education staff, that the docents had a range of experience and training regarding teaching and learning. Therefore, I incorporated a distinct exploration of learning design into their profession learning sessions. In the next three sections of this chapter, I will explore in more detail the design and implementation

of the professional learning session for the museum education staff and gallery teaching fellows as well as the professional learning sessions for the docents.

Engaging in Professional Learning with the Museum Education Staff

As introduced above, the first session I offered was for the museum education staff and gallery teaching fellows at the Blanton. Key questions guiding this session included: *How do museum educators' identities inform the ways they facilitate guided visits? How can museum educators bring multiple perspectives into guided visits? How can drama-based pedagogy be implemented on the museum floor to engage participants in multimodal meaning-making?* During the training, we explored the first question about identity through drama-based strategies in a separate classroom location outside the museum galleries; then, we moved into the galleries to explore how drama-based pedagogy might create opportunities for multimodal meaning-making and perspectives sharing about objects on the museum floor.

In this professional learning session, we began by exploring how our identities as educators affect our work. As scholar and activist Gloria Ladson-Billings states in the article "Preparing Teachers for Diverse Student Populations: A Critical Race Theory Perspective," "people's narratives and stories are important in truly understanding their experiences and how those experiences may represent confirmation or counterknowledge of the way society works" (219). As educators, it is important to share stories and experiences with one another in order to realize how they shape the way we see the world and interact with students or museum visitors. The second part of the session for the

museum education staff and gallery teaching fellows consisted of my modeling how performative embodiment[3] can be used to build dialogue on the museum floor. To do this, I led the museum educators through two art-based inquiries, each focusing on the elements of a specific art piece and an overarching or essential question related to the themes of that piece. Each inquiry also included a drama-based strategy that gave the museum educators the opportunity to embody their responses to the overarching question and to build on their understanding of the art piece using their bodies and voices. The inquiries ended with participants having the opportunity to reflect on what they created and how their experience connected to their lives and the art piece (see Appendix A for an example of an inquiry). Both art pieces were by people of color, and when I shared information about the pieces, I brought in voices of people of color through written text and audio that directly related to the content of the art pieces. As a white educator working with pieces by artists of color, I felt it was important to decentralize my perspective by offering voices and ideas besides my own to provide context and insights into the art pieces.

The session for museum education staff and gallery teaching fellows concluded with a guided reflection on what they experienced while participating in the inquiries and how they could see themselves incorporating the drama-based strategies into their work on the gallery floor. This session was meant as an introduction to what would happen in the docent sessions, so the staff could support the docents in their learning.

[3] I see performative embodiment as an integral part of drama-based pedagogy, so there are times that I may use these two terms almost interchangeably.

Engaging in Professional Learning with the Docents

The next three professional development sessions in my training series were designed specifically for the docents, though the museum education staff and the gallery teaching fellows were invited to attend. Key questions for this series included: *What are barriers to participant engagement on the museum floor? How can museum educators bring multiple perspectives into guided visits? How can drama-based pedagogy be designed and implemented on the museum floor to engage participants in multimodal meaning-making?* These sessions were meant to provide the docents with scaffolded steps to incorporating drama-based strategies into their gallery visits. The docent series, like the museum educators' session, was constructivist in its design. In the article "Professional Learning Contextualized in Practice," Webster-Wright references the work of Barbara Rogoff, Kurt Lewin and Stephen Billet when she states that "scaffolded participation involving mentoring or modeling" can support professional learning (721). This idea of scaffolded participation, based on the constructivist principles of Lev Vygotsky, influenced the structure of the docent session series.

I designed the three docent sessions to move from modeling to mentoring to independent work. In the first session, I invited the docents to share their experiences on the museum floor, particularly around barriers to visitor engagement. As is stated in *Start Talking: A Handbook for Engaging Difficult Dialogue in Higher Education*, edited by Kay Landis of the Office of Community Partnerships at the University of Alaska Anchorage, "People need to be heard before they can take in new information" (2). I then

modeled performative embodiment as a dialogic practice in the same way that I did in the session for the museum education staff and gallery teaching fellows. I modeled three different drama-based strategies that addressed three different art pieces. Then, the docents were given the opportunity to reflect on each strategy, its strengths and challenges in a museum setting, and how they might incorporate the strategy into their practice.

The focus of the professional learning then shifted to learning design, particularly backward design, and how to build a drama-based strategy into a larger inquiry around an art piece. I encouraged the docents to first choose an essential question for the inquiry that related to the art piece and its thematic elements, and then pick a drama-based strategy that complemented the essential question (see Appendix B for the learning design outline I provided to the docents). The docents then split into groups and wrote a drama-based inquiry around an art-piece of their choosing. During this time, I moved between the groups, supporting their work. Unfortunately, at the last docent session, only one docent that had been a part of planning an inquiry at the prior training session attended. So, in place of the docents sharing their inquiries, we walked through the galleries, and the museum educators in attendance (education staff, gallery teaching fellows and docents) picked pieces that they were currently using or hoping to use in their guided visits. Then, we talked through possible drama-based inquiries surrounding each piece they selected.

Shadowing, Feedback and Dialogic Reflection

I offered all museum educators who attended at least one professional learning session the opportunity for further mentoring through one-on-one feedback and collaborative reflection. This would consist of me shadowing them on a guided visit, followed by the two of us engaging in dialogic reflection. I had six museum educators volunteer for one-on-one shadowing and dialogic reflection. Of these six museum educators, three were docents, two of whom I shadowed on public tours[4] and one of whom I shadowed on a visit with a 5th grade class[5]. Two of the volunteers were gallery teaching fellows, whom I shadowed on guided visits with students. I shadowed the first on a guided visit with university students, and I shadowed the second on two different visits with high school students as a part of the "Doing Social Justice" program. The sixth volunteer for one-on-one shadowing and feedback was a member of the museum education staff, and I shadowed her on a visit with high school students as a part of the "Doing Social Justice" program as well.

METHODOLOGY

Although I gathered data on all six museum educators who engaged in shadowing, feedback and reflection, I will focus my reporting for this thesis document on

[4] The Blanton describes their public tours as "themed tours of the permanent collection and special exhibitions" which happen at regular times on Saturdays, Sundays and Thursdays ("Visit: Groups & Tours").

[5] The Blanton's visits or gallery lessons with K-12 students, according to their website, "will feature four to six works of art and include some longer interpretive conversations, group activities, and choice-based learning opportunities" ("Academic Resources: School Programs").

the dialogic reflection that took place after I shadowed the three museum educators who led guided visits with upper elementary through high school students. This dialogic reflection provided me with specific insight into how these educators were seeing drama-based strategies functioning in their guided visits. It also showed how dialogic reflection-on-action can support educators in developing their facilitation skills. In these reflective dialogues, I asked the museum educators what they thought went well, where they experienced challenges, and what from the professional learning sessions they were applying in their work on the museum floor. I then asked if they were interested in constructive feedback on their guided visit, and if they agreed, I offered them my thoughts. Some of the visits were recorded; I took detailed qualitative field notes for others. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

I examined the data collected from the dialogic reflections of the museum educators through a case study structure and cross-case analysis. I chose a case study structure because "it provides the researcher and audience opportunities to more closely examine the human condition by focusing on an individual's story" (Saldaña and Omasta 150). By focusing on individual's stories, I could look at how prior knowledge and experience affected how the individual's used, and perceived their use, of drama-based strategies on the museum floor. By engaging in a cross-case analysis, I could compare the experiences and perspectives of the individuals in each case study, analyzing the similarities and differences between the ways the individual participants reflected on their use of drama-based strategies in guided visits.

As described above, I focused my research on the three interviews with the museum educators who led guided visits with K-12 students. I choose to focus on K-12 guided visits because the museum educators with whom I worked thought K-12 visitors would be more interested in drama-based strategies than adult visitors. I chose to specifically use these three educators as case studies for a variety of other reasons as well. These three educators were the most interested in integrating drama-based strategies into their guided visits, and they used multiple drama-based strategies in each visit that I shadowed (as well as in visits that I did not shadow). This gave us the opportunity to discuss their perspectives on integrating drama-based strategies into guided visits. Additionally, this allowed for a more aligned cross-case analysis, because their visits had similar structures and goals.

For each of the three case studies that follow, I first looked at the transcription of our dialogic reflection for examples of how the museum educator generally described drama-based strategies in gallery visits. I then used thematic coding to look at how each museum educator was (or was not) seeing drama-based pedagogy as a way for students to explore multiple perspectives, to engage in multimodal ways of knowing, and/or to explore collaborative learning on the museum floor. Thematic coding is an inductive and deductive process that allows researchers to "build their patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up" (Creswell 186). Therefore, to refine my thinking, I looked back and forth between themes and data through multiple rounds of coding to see if there was evidence to support the initially determined themes. I then conducted an additional layer of analysis as I looked for moments when dialogic reflection-on-action led to a deeper

understanding for the museum educators in how to effectively design and implement drama-based strategies for museum settings.

CASE STUDIES, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this next section, I will share the three case studies from my research followed by a cross-case analysis and discussion. For each of the three case studies, I begin with a descriptive background for the museum educator, followed by how they used a drama-based strategy in the guided visit that I shadowed. I invited each of the participants to provide their own list of personal identifiers because as a constructivist researcher, I recognize that "interpretation flows from . . . personal, cultural and historical experiences" (Creswell 8). Next, I share specific data from our dialogic reflection on how the educators see the drama-based strategy functioning with participants on the museum floor, which illuminates their understandings of drama-based pedagogy. I then share excerpts from our dialogic reflection-on-action that illuminate how discursive reflection helps the individuals see how they might adapt the drama-based strategy in the future. To conclude, I will compare the case studies to assess similarities and differences among the different museum educators' experiences with drama-based pedagogy and learning design, which allows me to see the through lines of the three case studies.

Case Study One: Student Choice and the Role of Reflection

Debbie has been a docent at the Blanton for four years. When asked to share personal identifiers that she uses to describe herself, Debbie named that she is female, white, a teacher, liberal, and a wife, mother and grandmother. She also shared that she has a background in education. Debbie was one of the few docents who was able to attend all three of the docent professional learning sessions that I offered. During the

third session, she had the opportunity to talk through and try out portions of an inquiry she and her colleagues had been planning during the second professional learning session. Due to her background as an educator and her experience in the professional learning sessions, Debbie had a strong understanding of how to scaffold an inquiry with a drama-based strategy.

I shadowed Debbie on a guided visit with 5th grade students who were on the first of a multi-visit experience called "Inquiring Minds," which connects science and art. "Inquiring Minds," according to the Blanton's teacher's guide for the program, "is organized around three STEAM related themes that build upon one another: experimentation in the art museum, design and engineering, art and the natural sciences" ("Blanton School Programs Brochure"). Debbie integrated two drama-based strategies into the guided visit; in this case study, I will explore her use of the drama-based strategy "This Setting Needs" to explore the piece *High Yellow*[6] (see illustration 1) by Ellsworth Kelly because this strategy was a focus of our post-visit dialogic reflection.

[6] While the term "high yellow" can be used in a pejorative sense, I have not found evidence that Kelly was using the title in this way.

Illustration 1: Kelly, Ellsworth. *High Yellow*. 1960. Blanton Museum of Art, Austin. *Blanton Museum of Art,* collection.blantonmuseum.org/Obj14506?sid=4875&x=112095.

"This Setting Needs" is a strategy where students create a frozen image with their bodies based on a prompt provided by a facilitator (Dawson and Lee 203). One at a time, the students choose a character or object that might exist in the setting or place named by the facilitator (ex. the rainforest), and they say "This setting needs [the character or object]." They then enter a given playing space and freeze in a statue of that character or object. This process is repeated until the teacher or facilitator calls the process to a stop, having the remaining students, or "audience," describe what they see in the frozen image.

Debbie began her facilitation by inviting students to look closely at Ellsworth Kelly's piece, giving them time to take it in. She then asked students to share what they saw, allowing them the space to share multiple interpretations of the piece. Debbie followed this by telling the students a story about Kelly. She said he "liked to draw what he saw out his window" and then "wanted to distill it down" (Field notes 2 Feb. 2018), which provided the students with some knowledge about the artist and his process while also encouraging them to think about the piece as a simplified landscape. Next, Debbie linked the new information about the artist to students' further analysis and interpretation of the work as she invited the students to think about what kind of landscape the abstract image might represent, and what might be missing from that landscape (or setting). She asked students to demonstrate their thinking by creating an image with their bodies in front of the piece to fill in the landscape. Through this process, the students needed to

work collaboratively to create a cohesive image. During the construction of the image, a few students chose not to join the image making process, so Debbie invited them to walk through the embodied landscape that their peers created, which they all agreed to do. Debbie concluded the inquiry by asking the students to give one another a round of applause for the image they created.

Reflection on Action: Benefits of Drama-Based Strategies on the Museum Floor

In her post-visit reflective dialogue, Debbie described the group of students in her session as "a dream group" that was "pretty responsive" with "no behavior problems." We agreed that the students were particularly responsive to embodied ways of working because they easily engaged in close looking, art making and dialogue when invited. Debbie described the students as having "pizazz" when taking part in "This Setting Needs," and she felt that the strategy was particularly successful because all students found a way to join the image making processes. In our dialogic reflection on student choice and participation in the soundscape activity, Debbie named a moment of reflection-in-action, saying, "The ones that really hadn't said anything, I wanted them to be in it. But then they were fine, you know, just walking through the park. I wasn't sure if they'd do that or not." Here, Debbie refers to the embodied frozen image as the "park," which other students then strolled through. It's interesting to note that Debbie had not originally imagined this "stroll through the park" as a part of the strategy, but when she saw that some students were not joining the frozen image, she had a moment of reflection-in-action, and shifted the strategy to offer students another way to engage in

the image-making. By allowing the students choice within the image-making process, Debbie provided all of the students a way to engage with which they felt comfortable.

A key aspect of our post-dialogic reflection focused on Debbie's concerns related to group size and student participation. Debbie asked me what she could have done if the group of students had been larger and unable to all fit in a frozen image in front of the painting:

> Debbie: Do you try, when you have school children, to use the whole group?
>
> Me: I think it's fine to not [have all the of students in the image], because there are some that inevitably don't want to. And then they can be the observers. So then you could even ask them ok, how does it look different, how is this different having all of these things in this scene.

When some of the students remain outside of the image, it gives them the opportunity to describe what the image looks like from the outside and to share how the addition of the embodied frozen image changes the landscape of the painting.

When asked to think about how students can reflect on the image-making process following "This Setting Needs," Debbie said, "when I stopped [inviting students into the image] I thought . . . what do I do next? [. . .] all I could think of was let's just give, you know, everybody a round of applause."

Debbie experienced another reflection-in-action moment at the conclusion of her facilitation; she realized in the moment that she had not planned a closing for the strategy. Consequently, she chose the ritual of a round of applause to close out the moment. Debbie then asked me what I thought she should have done, and I responded by saying, "what is the objective for you in doing "This Setting Needs"? [. . .] how do you feel like

it's relating to the painting?" I wanted to know if she had based the strategy on an essential question or big idea, because her purpose behind using the strategy could inform how she chose to close the strategy. Debbie was quick to respond, saying,

> since it is an empty painting […] it's nice to think about populating it with people and noise. And so I guess my thought would be to have them sit down and look at it again, or stand and look at it again, and then think about what it would look like after what we had just done. You know, to have them look at the painting, close [their] eyes, and think of it with the clouds and the skyscraper. And then ask them if they would like it better that way.

Through our reflection-on-action after her session, Debbie realized her objective for the strategy, and this led her to imagine how she might close out the strategy to meet this objective. She wanted students to think about whether they liked the painting with or without the embodied image, and she realized that she needed to invite students to look back at the painting without the image, and compare it to what they had created in conjunction with the image, in order to reflect on which version of the painting they "liked" better.

Conceptualizing Drama-Based Pedagogy and Student Choice

By dialogically engaging in Schön's practice of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, Debbie began to unpack how drama-based strategies provide multi-modal differentiation and student choice on the museum floor, which can lead to higher levels of participation. She says about the students in her guided visits:

> the big thing that [museum educators are] finding out across the board is that a lot of times, [the students] don't want to say anything specifically, but yet, they'll react by moving or they'll react by writing something or pointing out something in a painting.

Debbie recognized that while some students may not be ready for or comfortable with voicing their ideas, they may be ready for or comfortable with engaging in a different

kind of response. By staying open to moments of reflection-in-action, Debbie discovered a way to provide a differentiated moment of choice in "This Setting Needs." She gave students the opportunity to join a frozen image in front of the painting or to walk through the frozen image after it was created. Not only was Debbie offering students embodiment (as opposed to verbal dialogue) as a way of making meaning around the painting, she was also offering choice within the embodiment. By offering students multiple ways of engaging, with different levels of risk, Debbie created an environment where all of the students felt ready and willing to take part in the strategy. This had not been the case for other parts of the guided visit, which Debbie refers to when she references "the [students] that really hadn't said anything."

Conceptualizing Drama-Based Pedagogy and Learning Design

In our dialogic reflection, I suggested that Debbie could invite some students to remain outside of the embodied image, which offers an additional mode of differentiation; students can participate as audience members instead of taking part in the embodiment. This would have provided a group of students who could look at the frozen image and the landscape of the painting as a whole, reflecting on what the image and painting looked like in conjunction with one another. Additionally, Debbie and I reflected that she could have offered the students an opportunity to reflect after creating the image. She had a clear objective for the students within the strategy: she wanted to know if the students liked the painting better with or without their frozen and moving images layered onto it, but she didn't make this objective known to the students. In reflecting on her facilitation, Debbie realized that her instructional objectives needed to be made explicit

for the students after the strategy so they could make meaning around what they created. As I reflect-on-action about our conversation together, I also wonder how I could have invited Debbie to further explore her objective for the activity, asking herself why she wanted to know if the students liked the painting better with the embodied image in front of it. How does this objective relate to an essential question or big idea for the inquiry as a whole?

In *The Reflexive Teaching Artist: Collected Wisdom from the Drama/Theatre Field,* Dawson and Kelin state that "Quality, drama learning experiences benefit from a shared, transparent understanding of intention and pursuit of quality, which is co-constructed and refined throughout the entire process" (87). Providing the students with the opportunity to reflect after they built their frozen image in front of the Kelly painting could help engage the students in co-constructing an understanding of what quality art looks like for them, and this exploration of the meaning of quality art could have been the basis of an essential question for the inquiry. *Do the students enjoy the abstracted piece alone, or do they prefer the piece when it's "filled" with embodied representations of people and objects?* and *Why do they feel that way?* This was important learning for me for future mentorship of gallery teaching with this drama-based strategy.

In reflecting-on-action, Debbie discovered that by integrating drama-based strategies into her gallery visits, she offered students a variety of ways to respond to an art object and to engage in dialogue. Through "This Setting Needs," she "expand[ed] educational activities beyond traditional verbal material organized to appeal to logical-mathematical thinkers" (Hein 165) by introducing embodiment into the art interpretation. Debbie also recognized that the students needed the opportunity to reflect after the image-making process to concretize their artistic perspective on the art piece and their embodied creation. Additionally, Debbie began to interrogate her understanding of

learning design by reflecting on her original intentions for using "This Setting Needs" on the gallery floor. All of these discoveries through reflection-on-action have the possibility of enhancing Debbie's gallery teaching practice in the future.

Case Study Two: Non-linguistic, Collaborative Meaning-Making

Rachel is on the education staff at the Blanton. She spent two years volunteering as a docent for the museum before joining the staff, and she joined the staff six months before attending the professional learning sessions. When asked to share personal identifiers she uses to describe herself, Rachel named that she identifies as a daughter, a sister, a partner, female, and as an educator. Rachel also mentioned that she holds an undergraduate and an advanced degree relating to the arts. Rachel attended three of the four professional learning sessions. The day before I shadowed her, she and I walked through her plan for the guided visit. Her background in the arts and the time we spent together discussing her guided visit put Rachel in a strong position to plan drama-based inquiries for the visit I shadowed.

I accompanied Rachel on a guided visit with a class of high school students. This was the first visit of a multi-visit series for the "Doing Social Justice" program, and this visit focused on the guiding question, "Who are we and what do we notice?" ("Blanton School Programs Brochure") Prior to the visit, the classroom teacher informed Rachel that her students were studying Native American history, and Rachel tailored the visit to allow students to share their knowledge of Native American history and to connect this knowledge to the pieces at the Blanton.

Rachel named two drama-based strategies that she used, "Exploding Atom" and "Soundscape," as successful moments in her guided visit. I will focus on her use of "Soundscape" here, because she reflected more explicitly on this strategy in our dialogic

reflection following her guided visit. “Soundscape” is a strategy that “ask[s] students to think about and create the multiple sounds that may be heard in a specific location or event in time” (Dawson and Lee 235). In this strategy, the facilitator names a location or event, and students are invited to create different sounds with their voices or bodies that represent sounds from that location or event.

Rachel and I conceived of the “Soundscape” application together prior to the guided visit. For this strategy, Rachel took the students to the “Art of the American West” gallery and directed their attention to four paintings (see illustrations 2-5) that depicted different aspects of the American West (though all through a White, European lens).

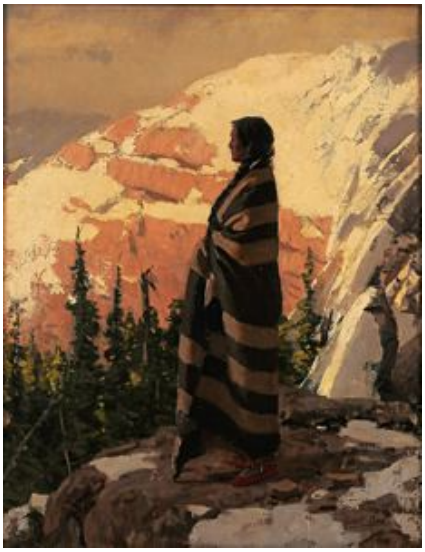

Illustration 2: Gaul, William Gilbert. *The Land of the Free*. circa 1900, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin. *Blanton Museum of Art*, collection.blantonmuseum.org/Obj14009?sid=4875&x=111266.

Illustration 3: Bierstadt, Albert. *Indian Canoe*. circa 1886, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin. *Blanton Museum of Art*, collection.blantonmuseum.org/Obj13990?sid=4875&x=110989.

Illustration 4: Remington, Frederic Sackrider. *The Charge [A Cavalry Scrap]*. 19th-20th century. Blanton Museum of Art, Austin. *Blanton Museum of Art,* collection.blantonmuseum.org/Obj14043?sid=4875&x=110039.

Illustration 5: Dixon, Lafayette Maynard. *Top of the Ridge*. 20th century. Blanton Museum of Art, Austin. *Blanton Museum of Art,* collection.blantonmuseum.org/Obj13979?sid=4875&x=110797.

For the "Soundscape" activity, students broke into three groups, and each group chose one of the paintings. The groups then chose three sounds that they believed would take place in the setting that the painting established. Rachel gave examples of some sounds (voices, nature sounds), and then invited students to think about how the sounds were interacting with one another. Each student in the small groups chose which sound they'd like to make (some could be repeated by more than one student), and these sounds had varying levels of risk (ex. patting your hands on your legs versus making a sound with your voice). The students then shared a combination of these sounds with the rest of the class, demonstrating their analysis of the painting through voice and sound.

Rachel closed this activity by following a "Describe, Analyze, Relate" structure of questioning (Dawson and Lee). She asked the students to describe what they heard in each of the soundscapes, to analyze what those sounds might represent, and then to relate their inferences to specific facts about the painting. She then shifted the conversation to the different layers of art interpretation by asking the students to "Imagine what the

setting is like. What kinds of stories are we getting?" and then "Whose perspectives are these stories from?" (Field Notes 20 Feb. 2018).

Reflection on Action: Benefits of Drama-Based Strategies on the Museum Floor

In our dialogic reflection, Rachel stated that the "Soundscape" strategy was "incredibly successful in getting students to participate right from the get go." It provided an access point to an exploration of the paintings that didn't require verbalizing, which had been difficult for some of the participants at other moments throughout the guided visit. Rachel also noted that the strategy was "getting them to participate in different ways that they might not expect in the museum space." This alternative form of participation, non-linguistic meaning-making, seemed to draw the students in, and it sparked them to participate in dialogic meaning-making after the strategy. Rachel was particularly excited about one student's reflection after the strategy: she "made the connection between land in all of them, and how it was operating differently, [a person] could write a whole paper on that. That was a profound insight that you're bringing to the discussion." It seemed that throughout the guided visit, prior to the "soundscape" activity, the students were reticent to make connections to what they were learning in class, but these connections happened more easily after they had engaged in the creating and sharing of the soundscapes. Students noted the scenes in the art pieces were conflicting, with some "violent" and some "peaceful," and they connected this analysis to the complexities of Native American treaties that they were learning about in class.

During our dialogic reflection after the guided visit, Rachel and I both noted that the students were giggling throughout the "soundscape" strategy, and yet they all still chose to participate. We then discussed why students "giggle" (e.g. being uncomfortable performing in front of their peers) and brainstormed approaches which could help to

mitigate risk and embarrassment during the "Soundscape" strategy. I mentioned that perhaps the small groups of students could teach their sounds to the whole class, and then the class could make the soundscape all together. Rachel latched onto this idea saying, "it gets everyone performing." We agreed this revision in the strategy could lessen the level of risk for the students who initially created the soundscape, and it could keep all members of the class engaged because they're performing each soundscape, not just the one they conceptualized.

One challenge Rachel noted throughout her dialogue with me was facilitation pace and time management. In her reflection-on-action, she noted: "I think that I drew things out too long; we needed to be moving a little bit more quickly." She recognized that this was because of the number of questions she asked, and she reminded herself that when writing reflection questions, she needed to be thinking, "What's the goal." Through reflection-on-action, Rachel realized that she needed to determine an essential question for her inquiry and relate all other questions back to that initial essential question. One reason why the "Soundscape" activity was so successful was because, unlike with other inquiries within the guided visit, she focused the reflection on only two questions, and this focused questioning helped the students make meaning of the activity and the paintings. Through our dialogic reflection, Rachel also realized that she had positive reflection-in-action moments during the visit—places where her responsive questioning and framing of the strategy in "Soundscapes" helped to guide the students through the strategy and reflection.

By asking focused questions throughout the inquiry, Rachel provided the students with a scaffolded process for thinking about the paintings and their themes. The students knew what they were being asked to do in each step of the "Soundscape" activity, and the questions Rachel asked at the end of the strategy directly related to the process in which

they had just engaged. Rachel's guidance provided the students with clear steps to shape their interpretation of the art pieces, and this resulted in more active student participation in reflective dialogue after the strategy.

Conceptualizing Drama-Based Pedagogy and Multimodal Meaning-Making

Through the "Soundscape" strategy, Rachel provided the students with a multi-modal way to make meaning of the paintings. By embodying and listening to the sounds of the landscapes, they developed a deeper meaning of the paintings, and the connections and differences between them. The "Soundscape" strategy, as an example of performative embodiment, centers experiences in the body, so bodies are "acknowledged, made visible and, moved to the center of [the] pedagogical experience" (Perry and Medina 63). This allowed the students to internalize the paintings they viewed, making the body "a site of cultural inscription where norms, practices and symbols are inscribed" (Perry and Medina 63). The students were making their soundscapes in small groups, which gave them an access point to analyzing the paintings that was lower risk than initially voicing their opinions individually to the whole class. By working collaboratively, students were "actively work[ing] as an ensemble to imagine new possibilities and to embody and make meaning as a way to situate understanding within the larger narrative/story of the human condition" (Dawson and Lee 18).

In *The Participatory Museum*, Nina Simon says that "questions that prompt social engagement with objects" are questions that make "visitors feel confident and capable of answering the question. The question draws on their knowledge, not their comprehension of institutional knowledge" (140). In the "Soundscape" strategy, the students were building their own knowledge and understanding of the paintings through personal

experience and imagination, which readied them to engage in dialogic meaning-making. Rachel noted this dialogic meaning-making as the indicator of the success of the strategy.

Conceptualizing Drama-Based Pedagogy and Questioning

Rachel also noted how dialogic reflection-on-action helped her to consider her own practice. By reflecting with me, Rachel noticed moments of reflection-in-action from her guided visit that she did not act upon (ex. when she chose to continue asking questions even after she felt she may have already asked too many). This led to important discoveries about learning design. For example, through our reflection-on-action dialogue together, Rachel realized that a big idea or essential question for her inquiry could help to shape the reflection questions she asked towards the end of the inquiry. While all of the questions Rachel asked throughout the guided visit were pertinent to the art pieces and their themes, they were not necessarily related to one another. She recognized through our discussion that if she had an essential question, she could more easily pare down the questions she planned to ask by making sure they related back to the essential question. Rachel's discoveries about learning design, which included how to choose questions but also encompassed how to scaffold a strategy to mitigate risk, were a part of her growing understanding of and comfort with drama-based pedagogy.

Case Study Three: Student Engagement and Reading Images

Lisa was a Gallery Teaching Fellow at the Blanton. At the time of the professional learning sessions, she had been working with the education team for two months. When asked to share personal identifiers she uses to describe herself, Lisa named

the categories of identifiers that are important to her[7], which were gender expression, nationality, class, race and educational status. Lisa also shared that she had an undergraduate degree relating to the arts, and she was working on an advanced degree in the arts. Lisa had a strong background in the arts, and she gained a significant background in applying drama-based pedagogy in galleries through a museum theatre course. It is important to note that before the study, Lisa and I had a prior relationship and a shared class, so we had a number of informal conversations about the implementation of drama-based strategies on the museum floor. Due to her background and prior training, Lisa was very adept at integrated drama-based strategies into her guided visits, but she was often critical of her work.

I shadowed Lisa on two guided visits, the first and second visits of a "Doing Social Justice" multi-visit experience. These guided visits were with high school students, and the students from both visits came from the same school. Lisa used a number of drama-based strategies in her guided visits, some of them of her own making. In this case study, I will refer to Lisa's use of "Statues" because of the success she saw with the strategy and because of the rich conversation that we had around the strategy in our dialogic reflection following the guided visit.

The drama-based strategy "Statues" invites students to "quickly shape their own bodies individually and independently to create a frozen 'statue' that represents a person, feeling or idea" (Dawson and Lee 202). For her inquiry with "Statues," Lisa modified a sequence I modeled during one of the professional learning sessions with the piece *Untitled (I am Somebody)* (see illustration 6) by Glenn Ligon.

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[7] Lisa interpreted the note "Please take the space below to share 5 identifiers that you have that are most important to you" as sharing categories of identifiers that she found meaningful in general instead of naming specific identifiers she would use to describe herself.

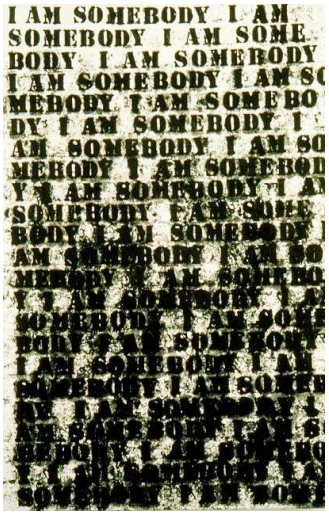

Illustration 6: Ligon, Glenn. *Untitled (I am Somebody)*. 1991, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco. *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,* sfmoma.org/artwork/97.776.[8]

Lisa began by asking the students to look closely at the painting in silence and then to describe what they saw. She then asked for three volunteers to read the text of the painting, which was a repetition of the phrase "I am Somebody," using the descriptions their peers had provided of the piece to influence how they read the text. Lisa encouraged the rest of the class to close their eyes as the text was read. She used this exercise as an opportunity for the students to explore the piece through multiple senses, seeing and speaking/hearing, which gave them a different perspective on the piece. Lisa then asked the students to describe this experience of speaking or hearing the text of the piece, which acted as a brainstorming session for the "Statues" strategy that followed. Lisa asked the students to show what it means to say "I am Somebody" through embodiment, having them turn away from the group while creating. She then had half of the group share their images, while the other half of the group described what they saw. In her questions, Lisa

[8] This piece was on loan to the Blanton during my professional learning sessions with the museum educators.

directed the students to specifically look at the similarities between the statues. After all of the students had shared their statues, Lisa provided some background on the piece, stating that Ligon was "calling on the history of this phrase [I am Somebody]" and its history with the civil rights movement and "claiming personhood in face of oppression."

Reflection on Action: Benefits of Drama-Based Strategies on the Museum Floor

When asked about moments of success in her guided visit during our dialogic reflection together, Lisa noted that the "statue[s] worked really well in getting engagement. And getting them all engaged." Through her knowledge-in-action, Lisa had provided the students with a number of opportunities to think about how the phrase "I am Somebody" related to their lives, which prepared them to embody the phrase. Lisa also pointed out the importance of embodiment as non-linguistic engagement during our dialogic reflection: "And you could see at that moment, the eyes. [. . .] The engagement of, they're at least thinking about the questions being asked. Even if they're not verbalizing it to me or to themselves." Lisa recognized that not all students wanted to engage verbally, but they were all participating and making meaning around the painting when they created statues with their bodies.

Lisa also pointed out the importance of "really picking the questions" she asked. "I used to have way more questions [when previously using this strategy]. Really picking the questions, really picking key terms and then kind of allowing those key terms to go through" was an important discovery for her. Throughout the facilitation, Lisa continually noted the repetition of the phrase "I am Somebody" in the piece, centering the inquiry around what effects repetition can have on a person. This gave Lisa a clear objective for the exploration of the piece, and this clarity helped guide the students in making meaning around the work of art.

When asking students to reflect on the statues they and their peers created, Lisa focused on the similarities between the statues, and in paired reflection after the guided visit, I noted that she should be sure to "point out the ones that don't have commonalities as well." This would help keep students from feeling like their statues were "wrong" if they were distinctly different from those created by their peers. I also noted that these differences could bring "a lot of richness to the conversation." Lisa responded by noting that she didn't want "to call that out," because the student who created a particularly unique statue had not seemed interested in engaging throughout the visit prior to the "Statues" strategy. I shared with her then that that student asked his teacher if she had seen what he created, indicating that perhaps he had wanted his statue to be recognized after all.

Conceptualizing Drama-Based Pedagogy and Student Engagement

Lisa saw the "Statues" strategy as a moment of success because of student engagement in the making and reading of statues, but the drama-based strategy was also effective because of the scaffolding Lisa provided before the strategy. Lisa prepared the students for embodiment by providing them with the opportunity to analyze the painting and then imagine why a person might repeat the phrase "I am Somebody" before she asked the students to put this phrase into their bodies. Lisa's facilitation of statues and her reflection after the guided visit showed a deep understanding of the complexities of drama-based pedagogy. Lisa recognized the need for clear planning, and she used a backward design process to build her inquiry. She knew she wanted the students to think about the meaning of repetition in the piece, and how that might connect to their lives, and she kept this in mind through each step of the inquiry.

Lisa also saw embodiment as a means of engaging students who had not spoken up in discussions. As mentioned before, a student who had hung back in the guided visit prior to visiting "I am Somebody" chose to create a statue, and not just any statue, but a statue distinctly different from those created by his classmates. He used the embodiment activity as a way to express a very personal representation of what it means to say "I am Somebody." Lisa made this personal expression lower risk for all students involved by having the statues read in groups instead of individually.

Conceptualizing Drama-Based Pedagogy and Reading Images

Lisa chose not to point out the student with the distinctly different statue when leading the students through describing one anothers' statues, because she was worried the student would be embarrassed. By dialogically reflecting-on-action, though, Lisa realized the complexities of this choice. She noticed that students who choose to engage through drama-based strategies may have different levels of comfort with having their bodies read by their peers, and these comfort levels may not be readily evident to the facilitator.

As I personally reflect on Lisa's choice to pass over reading the student's distinctly different statue, I wonder how the student may have reacted if Lisa had asked him if he minded sharing his statue with the class. Lisa could have provided him with the choice to have his statue read, though it is possible that this questioning may have made him feel put on the spot or singled out, which Lisa was hoping to avoid. Dawson and Lee also suggest that "When reading images, disconnect the performer's identity from the character or idea they represent" (195), which may also decrease the risk of having one's embodied statue read by the teacher or the class. By referring to the performer as "this character" instead of calling them by their name, educators can provide distance between

a student and the image they created, so the statue is less about the student's personal response to the prompt and more about a possible response to the prompt. Lisa began to understand and articulate some of these challenges of reading bodies through her reflection-on-action.

Cross-Case Analysis and Discussion

When making comparisons of my data analysis across all three case studies, key themes began to emerge related to students' experience of the drama-based learning, the educators' use and understanding of effective drama-based learning design, and my own design of the professional learning experience for educators (with a particular emphasis on dialogic reflection-on-action). In my cross-case analysis, first I will explore the shifts in the type and quality of multimodal meaning-making that emerged through the integration of drama-based approaches into gallery teaching. I will also examine drama-based pedagogy's relationship to perceived levels of student engagement and agency in guided visits. Next, I will look at how the "effectiveness" of the drama-based strategies relates to the educators' understanding and implementation of learning design. Finally, I will reflect on how the practice of dialogic reflection-on-action supported the educators in deepening their understanding of learning design related to performative embodiment and drama-based pedagogy.

Drama-Based Pedagogy and Perceived Impacts on Student Engagement

In all three case studies, the facilitators recognized that performative embodiment through drama-based strategies provided students with a multimodal method of engaging with and analyzing art pieces. Through the use of the body to create images in "This Setting Needs" and "Statues" and the use of the body to create sound in "Soundscapes,"

students engaged at a perceived higher level than when they were asked to engage simply by answering questions. Rachel also discovered that the students in her guided visit were more active in answering questions after they had engaged in embodied meaning-making. This perceived increase in student engagement due to drama-based pedagogy supports Perry and Medina's call for "pedagogical spaces [where educators recognize] bodies as an essential element of practice and analysis" (63).

The facilitators also recognized that drama-based strategies provided students with a choice in the way they responded to the art pieces. Even when students were all invited to engage in the same task (ex. create an embodied statue), they could choose how they wanted to engage in that task. Students could choose to create a representational statue or an abstract statue; they could make a subtle statue or an expansive statue. These choices mitigated student risk, because the students had agency regarding their engagement. This increase in student choice and agency through drama-based pedagogy also led to the perception of a higher level of engagement for the student participants.

Additionally, the drama-based approaches used by all three facilitators invited students to pull from their personal experiences and/or imaginations to make inferences about the art pieces. For example, Debbie invited the students to imagine what might fill an abstract painting that looked like green grass and a blue sky, which encouraged students to think about landscapes from their own lives, and what populated them, or to imagine new landscapes that they may not have visited. This incorporation of prior knowledge and imagination into drama-based pedagogy seemed to draw the students in, which supports George Hein's claim that "drama and theater are gripping, powerful media to draw visitors into a scene, make the human connection to objects apparent . . . and allow visitors' imaginations to expand and associate rich meanings with the objects displayed" (169).

Learning Design in Gallery Visits

All three facilitators had different levels of understanding and facility around learning design and drama-based pedagogy. As stated previously, learning design for drama-based pedagogy is based in backward design, which requires educators to begin with an essential question or goal, and then "work backwards" to design an inquiry to meet that goal. In our professional learning sessions, I emphasized how I used essential questions to frame drama-based inquiries in the museum, but I found that the museum educators often got side tracked by thinking only about *how* to implement the drama-based strategy instead of also thinking about *why* they were choosing to implement the drama-based strategy.

Through our dialogic reflection, Debbie was able to name an objective for "This Setting Needs," but it didn't explicitly connect to the interpretation of the art piece. Rachel articulated clear questions surrounding her inquiry after the "Soundscape" activity, but she did not thread these questions through the entire inquiry. Lisa, due to her more extensive background in drama-based pedagogy, did offer a clear essential question for her inquiry, which she introduced at the beginning of the inquiry, referenced during the "Statues" strategy, and brought up again during reflection after the strategy. In future iterations of this project, I will include a stronger focus on learning design in my training and individual support sessions.

Professional Learning and Reflection-on-Action

All three facilitators made discoveries about their facilitations through the process of reflecting on their knowing-in and reflection-in-action. Additionally, because the reflective practice was dialogic, I prompted the facilitators to describe moments of

knowing-in-action that they may not have recognized, or may not have been able to previously articulate. For example, because I mentioned to Rachel that she might want to pare down the number of questions she asked in an inquiry, she was able to recognize and articulate for herself that she was prone to asking more questions than she planned, which resulted in issues with time management. Dialogic reflection was also a practice of reciprocal growth for myself and the facilitators. For example, when Lisa and I discussed reading embodied images, we both posed questions and exchanged responses that deepened our understanding of the complexities of reading bodies.

As Webster-Wright states, "[Professional learning] . . . is best situated in a community that supports learning. Such situated learning at work can engage individuals in actively working with others on genuine problems within their professional practice" (703). Although our dialogic reflection was only between two people instead of within a community, I do believe our reflective practice created a space where both the facilitators and I could work on "genuine problems [within] our professional practice." The facilitators grew in their understandings of designing and implementing drama-based guided visits, and I grew in my understanding of drama-based pedagogy and its application in diverse spaces.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, I began with a description of the goals, design and implementation of the professional learning sessions I lead at the Blanton Museum of Art. Then, I provided a description of my data collection process and my reasoning behind choosing specifics case studies and the research structure of a cross-case analysis. Next, I shared each of the three case studies along with an analysis of my findings. Finally, I provided a

cross-case analysis that synthesized the findings of the case studies, and presented the ways in which the findings overlapped or differed.

Chapter 3

> "Pedagogy, like painting, sculpture or music, can be magical in its artful manipulation of inner ways of knowing into a mutually transforming relationship with outer events, selves, objects, and ideas" (Ellsworth 7).

Like Ellsworth, I believe that a pedagogy like drama-based pedagogy can be "magical in its artful" ability to transform both practitioners and learners through a collaborative expression of inner ways of knowing that leads to a new understanding of "outer events, selves, objects, and ideas." Throughout this project, I saw museum educators *and* their students transformed on the museum floor. I saw museum educators discover how performative embodiment can help them think critically about their work as facilitators, so that their students can build connections and new understandings about the world. In this chapter, I will review the discoveries these educators made about using drama-based pedagogy on the museum floor, and I will consider how reflection-based professional learning inspired these discoveries. Next, I will explore the limitations of this study and how they might be addressed in the future. Finally, I will consider future implications of drama-based professional learning for museum educators.

CONCLUSIONS

I began this study by offering professional learning sessions for museum educators that focused on how to incorporate drama-based pedagogy into guided visits. I modeled drama-based inquiries in the galleries during these sessions, and I shared my learning design structure for these inquiries, but only through dialogue with the museum educators did I fully understand what drama-based pedagogy and performative embodiment could do for learners on the museum floor. The museum educators who participated in my case studies created nuanced applications for drama-based strategies,

and in reflecting together, we determined what made these strategies effective for student learning. Additionally, we considered how we could continue to amend and modify these strategies to best support student engagement, agency, collaboration and meaning-making on the museum floor.

Throughout my study, it became clear that the participants found drama-based strategies to be effective in engaging K-12 students in art interpretation when used in guided visits on the museum floor. The participants perceived that the students in their visits, as a whole, were more actively engaged when participating in drama-based strategies than when simply being asked to answer questions about an art object. The students made connections to the art piece, their lived experiences and the outside world when making meaning through a frozen image, an individual statue or a collaborative soundscape. Throughout all of these strategies, students were exploring multiple perspectives through their connections with one another. Even when creating individual statues, students engaged with one another through the process of reading one another's images. The dialogic learning that occurred through drama-based strategies allowed students to step outside of themselves and see the perspectives and points of view of others. As Hein states, "social interaction allows learners to go beyond their individual experience, to extend their own knowledge and even their ability to learn" (172).

The drama-based strategies also offered students a multimodal approach to meaning-making, which provided students with ways of knowing and understanding that were beyond the verbal. The multimodal strategies also offered students choice: they could choose how they wanted to shape their body or use their voice. They could create something big or something small. They could create something loud or something soft. Performative embodiment offered students a non-linguistic option for meaning-making, which, when linked with linguistic meaning-making, increased the accessibility of the

meaning-making process to diverse learners. The options for exploration that drama-based pedagogy offered students supports Perry and Medina's call to "consider pedagogical spaces with bodies as an essential element of practice and analysis" (63). By considering what is happening in the body as a legitimate expression of knowing, museum educators are opening up new access points for students to express their understanding of art pieces, themselves and the world around them.

In this study, I was also reminded time and again of the importance of incorporating constructivist teaching practices into professional learning. The three case studies illuminated the efficacy of not just reflection-on-action, but dialogic reflection-on-action between educators engaged in aligned work. This practice allowed the museum educators to reflect on moments that felt difficult in their facilitations, and reflecting with another educator provided them with the opportunity to brainstorm ideas for future guided visits. As Rachel stated at the end of our one-on-one interview, "I have some intuitions about things after [a guided visit], like I know, oh I spent too long there. Maybe I should have cut that out. And then just hearing your feedback, it's like, yes. So when I'm in those moments, I follow that and trust it." I would recommend that museum educators who engage in constructivist practices on the museum floor make dialogic reflection-on-action with other museum educators a regular part of their practice in order to continue learning to trust their instincts and strengthen their practice through discussing challenges with another practitioner.

LIMITATIONS

While there were many successful moments in this study, it is difficult to draw widespread conclusions based on the data. My case studies only consisted of three museum educators, and the three educators had similar identity markers. All of my

participants were white, cisgender women. While this aligns with the white, female hegemonic spaces in museums, it also means that museum educators with different intersectional identities may perceive the use of drama-based pedagogy differently from these women, particularly when engaging in dialogue around identity. Additionally, all of the study participants had experience in either the field of education or the arts, which gave them a basic understanding of learning design and/or arts-based pedagogy.

The museum educators in this study self-selected to attend trainings and to continue working with me in the study. This suggests that the participants were already invested in trying drama-based strategies on the museum floor prior to the project, and their positive enthusiasm and experience with the approach should be viewed with a level of bias towards success. Additionally, I only explored the data from museum educators who led visits with K-12 students groups, although the museum also offers guided visits to groups of adults and university students, as well as guided visits for the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In future research, I would expand the study to include a wider range of museum educators, specifically more docents. Docents, at the Blanton, are an integral part of museum education because they lead a large number of guided visits, and they, as a group, had a wider variety of experiences with learning design and facilitation than the museum education staff and gallery teaching fellows. I imagine a study that focused exclusively on docent experiences with drama-based pedagogy would look quite different from this study. Docents are volunteers so it can be difficult to find times to work together. Consequently, an expanded docent study would need more training opportunities for docents to choose from than I could provide in this limited study. During my thesis, I was a full-time student who also had twenty hours of instructional

work assignments in my own department in addition to my research study to complete each week.

For a project that focused entirely on drama-based professional development with docents, I would begin by shadowing all of the docents, followed by dialogic reflection, in order to understand the successes and challenges that the docents are seeing on the museum floor. I would then incorporate drama-based professional learning into the pre-scheduled professional learning sessions that the docents commit to when they join the docent team. I would support their work with drama-based strategies by building a (voluntary) professional learning community for docents, gallery teaching fellows and museum education staff, so they could all share and reflect on their gallery visits in a constructive setting as peers. George Hein quotes adult learning specialists Luke Baldwin et. al. in stating that "adults often learn most effectively in groups that they join by choice, groups characterized by discussion, interaction, and collaboration and in which participants both receive and provide academic and social support" (174). A professional learning community characterized by "discussion, interaction, and collaboration" comprised of docents, museum education staff and gallery teaching fellows could provided the museum educators with a space for dialogic reflection similar to the paired reflection in my case studies.

CLOSING

I began this document with my love for a painting by Kandinsky that I was lucky enough to be able to visit time and again. My relationship with that Kandinsky helped me to feel a sense of belonging in museums, and that sense of belonging brought me to thinking about for whom museums feel accessible. I then explored the literature on constructivist museum education, which I see as a guideline for equitable and accessible

museum education, and I connected this museum literature to drama-based pedagogy and performative embodiment. I then explored literature on professional learning in order to envision what professional learning for museum educators would need to look like if it was to support constructivist practices on the museum floor through the methods of drama-based pedagogy.

The second chapter of this document shared how I designed, implemented and researched drama-based professional learning for the Blanton Museum of Art. I followed this with case studies that provided examples of how three museum educators implemented drama-based strategies on the museum floor, and how our dialogic reflection supported understanding around learning design in inquiries. I followed this with a cross-case analysis that looked at the themes of multimodal meaning-making, learning design in drama-based inquiries and the importance of dialogically reflecting on one's practice.

In this, my third chapter, I summarized how drama-based pedagogy, when used on the museum floor, supports engagement, choice and deep thinking for visitors through multimodal meaning-making. I then looked at limitations of the study, which included its size and the identities, backgrounds and pedagogical focuses of the participants. I followed this by offering a structure for an extended study of drama-based professional learning that focuses on docent education.

From this study, I conclude that the participants found drama-based pedagogy to be an effective means for engaging students in inquiry and interpretation around art pieces on the museum floor. Museum educators need continual support, though, in developing this pedagogical practice. Educators need professional learning in the design and implementation of drama-based pedagogy, and they need to reflect with other practitioners on their successes and challenges on the museum floor. If museum

educators reflect on their practices together, they can support one another in fully realizing the effects drama-based performative embodiment can have on museum visitors, which can result in more accessible museum education that fosters a sense of belonging in the museum for visitors.

Appendix A: Example of a Drama-based Inquiry from a Professional Learning Session

Soundscape and *Untitled (Hands/Stranger in the Village)*
(Essential Question(s): What are some of the many layers and themes of African American history? What are some of the narratives that are given less time and/or erased?)

Think first about what you see in this painting. Don't worry yet about what it "means."

Describe: What do you see?
(Colors, layers, text, image, texture, composition)

Analyze: What might that mean?

I'm going to ask you a few more questions in just a moment, but before I do that, I'd like to share some information about these paintings:

"In 1953 James Baldwin wrote "Stranger in the Village," an essay recounting his experience as the first African American to visit a small town in Switzerland. For *Untitled (Stranger in the Village/Hands #1)*, Ligon used glue, coal dust, and ink to stencil selections from Baldwin's text onto a silkscreened image of the crowd at the 1995 Million Man March in Washington, D.C." (www.moma.org/collection/works/96513)

- Million Man March (850,000 African American men marching on Washington)

Analyze: Any additional meanings you're bringing to these paintings after hearing that information?

Relate: Why might Ligon have chosen to create so many layers in this piece?

Transition: We're going to honor the layers of this piece by creating a layered soundscape to accompany it.

Soundscape
Invite students to name/describe sounds they might hear in a specific context. *What are sounds you might hear at a march*? *What might be some abstract sounds that represent the ideas we've discussed (give examples)? There is also text in this piece. I've pulled some quotes from the Baldwin piece "Stranger in the Village", so they can be part of our soundscape as well. You wouldn't have to read the whole quote, you could just pull out certain words.*

Once the group has brainstormed a number of ideas, ask for volunteers to vocally perform different sounds (march, abstract, text), ideally with similar sounds being seated together. Share and practice conducting hand signals to crescendo (get louder), decrescendo (get softer) and cut off (stop) all sound. Build a soundscape, inviting students to follow hand directions. Reflect on what students noticed about their work. Consider how different vocal and musical choices communicate a specific tone or quality to the listener; invite the group to describe the quality of the soundscape they produced.

Reflection:

- What types of sounds did we use to establish a location? feeling?
- Why were these the sounds that we picked? How did they help to evoke a sense of place?
- Where else might you hear these same kinds of sounds? Why?
- How did creating a soundscape give you more insight into this piece?

Appendix B: Learning Design Template for Docent Professional Learning Session

Guided Visit Planning Worksheet
The Blanton Museum of Art

Facilitators:

Art piece:

Target Audience:

Goals/Objectives of Facilitation:

Essential Question:

Materials:

Inquiry Design:

Part I: Describe, Analyze, Relate and Sharing Information (order may vary)

Describe:

Analyze:

Sharing information: (What specific information can you share that will support and scaffold visitor's learning? How does it connect to your goals/objectives and/or essential question? You may choose to ask another "Analyze" or "Relate" question after sharing information.)

Relate:

Transition: *How do you connect the reading of the visual art and information sharing to the drama-based strategy that comes next?*

Part II: Drama-based Strategy (Think about: Grouping, Emotion, Physical Activity, Choices)

Part III: Reflection (How are you asking visitors to connect the reading of the visual art and the drama-based strategy? How are they making connections to the themes of the piece and the lesson's objectives/essential question? How are they connecting to their own lives?)

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